

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 DLOS-03 AID-05 EB-07 CIEP-01 TRSE-00

STR-01 OMB-01 CEA-01 TAR-01 /085 W

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R 312100Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5548

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LA PAZ 0781/1

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EGEN, ETRD, BL

SUBJ: POSTPONEMENT OF BUENOS AIRES MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS

REF: STATE 021494

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTPONS IN REFTTEL, THE FULL TEXT OF THE DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT FOLLOWING THE ARGENTINE ANNOUNCEMENT AND THE REMARKS MADE BY THE SECRETARY IN HIS JANUARY 28 PRESS CONFERENCE WERE FORMALLY TRANSMITTED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ON JANUARY 30. WE HAD ALREADY DISTRIBUTED THE DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND ELSEWHERE IN TH GOB.

2. THE REACTIONS OF THE BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT, PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE MEDIA HAVE BEEN MUTED AND SOMEWHAT MIXED AS TO THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE BA-MFM. THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THROUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT IT HAD BEEN CONSULTED BY THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT ON THE POSTPONEMENT AND HAD NO OBJECTION. PRIVATELY, SENIOR GOB OFFICIALS SAY THAT THEY FAVOR CONTINUING THE "NEW DIALOGUE" AND BELIEVE THAT VENEZUELA AND ECUADOR HAVE CARRIED DEVELOPMENTS TO AN EXTREME. THEY FEEL THAT THE BA-MFM MIGHT HAVE BEEN AN UNPROFITABLE MEETING, BUT THE BASIC ELEMENT IN
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THEIR DECISION IS NOT TO BE ISOLATED FROM THE LATIN AMERICAN

GROUP.

3. MORE CONCRETELY ABOUT THE "NEW DIALOGUE", SENIOR GOB OFFICIALS MAINLY IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE, HAVE EXPRESSED PRIVATELY TO US THEIR DESIRE TO SEE MORE SUBSTANCE IN THE TALKS BETWEEN THE LATINS AND THE U.S. NATURALLY, THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE THEIR OWN BILATERAL CONCERNS FURTHERED IN THESE DISCUSSIONS, I.E. ACCESS TO THE SEA AND REDUCTION OF CHILE-PERU TENSIONS. PRIVATELY, BOLIVIAN OFFICIALS REGOGNIZE THAT THEIR COUNTRY AND THEIR CONCERNS HAVE A LOWER PRIORITY IN U.S. BILATERAL TREATMENT, AND THUS THEY SEE THE NEW DIALOGUE AS THEIR BEST CHANCE TO GET THEIR VIEWS PRESENTED. NONETHELESS, WE CAN EXPECT NO CLEAR OR PROMPT INITIATIVE ON THE PART OF THE GOB TO GET THE DIALOGUE GOING AGAIN.

4. THE BA-MFM AND ITS POSTPONEMENT IS OBVIOUSLY INTIMATELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE NEW U.S. TRADE BILL AND REACTIONS TO IT. WE HAVE USED MATERIAL FROM WASHINGTON THROUGH USIS OUTPUT TO THE MEDIA AND TO THE GOB AND PRIVATE SECTOR CONTACTS. IN FURTHER EFFORTS TO STRESS THE POSITIVE FEATURES OF THE TRADE BILL WE HAVE HAD PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH THE MINISTER OF COORDINATION, THE SUBSECRETARY OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, AND KEY MEMBERS OF A GOB CONSULTATIVE GROUP STUDYING THE TRADE BILL. IN A MORE VISIBLE EFFORT TO UNDERLINE THE BENEFITS OF THE LAW, I GAVE THE ANNUAL AMBASSADOR'S TALK TO THE BOLIVIAN-NORTH AMERICAN BUSINESS COUNCIL ON JANUARY 28, STRESSING THE POSITIVE AND FAVORABLE ASPECTS OF THE TRADE BILL. I INCLUDED IN THAT TALK A SENTENCE TO THE EFFECT THAT SUBJECTS SUCH AS THE DISCUSSION OF THE U.S. TRADE BILL ARE APPROPRIATE FOR DIALOGUE, NOT CONFRONTATION. WHILE THIS POINT WAS NOT FEATURED IN THE SUBSEQUENT NEWSPAPER COVERAGE, THE TEXT HAS APPEARED AND BEEN FAIRLY WIDELY READ. OUR ECONOMIC SECTION HAS HAD MANY DISCUSSIONS WITH KEY MEMBERS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR WHO HAVE INTERESTS IN TRADE WITH THE U.S. INFLUENCE ON GOB POLICY.

5. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THE REACTIONS OF THE GOB PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, AND OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR, TO THE TRADE BILL. PUBLICLY, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS STRESSED ITS CONCERN CONFIDENTIAL

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ABOUT DISCRIMINATION IN GENERAL AND IN THE OPEC CLAUSE BUT HAS NOT ATTACKED THE ENTIRE LEGISLATION. PRIVATELY, SENIOR GOB OFFICIALS, AS WELL AS MANY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, HAVE EXPRESSED SOME DISQUIET ABOUT PROVISIONS OF THE LAW WHICH MIGHT PERMIT POSSIBLE FUTURE U.S. EXECUTIVE BRANCH RETALIATION IF PRODUCERS' GROUPS OF WHICH BOLIVIA MIGHT BE A MEMBER WERE TO SEEK HIGHER PRICES FOR THEIR OUTPUT. THE DEFINITIVE GOB POSITION ON THE TRADE BILL IS BEING WORKED OUT BY THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

OF THE MINISTRY OF COORDINATION. IT IS EXPECTED THAT A MEMORANDUM FROM THIS GROUP, AFTER IT IS APPROVED BY THE MINISTER OF COORDINATION, WILL BE REVIEWED BY THE FULL CABINET. GEN. LECHIN, MINISTER OF COORDINATION, HAS TOLD ME JANUARY 30 THAT IF HE OR THE CABINET HAS ANY CONCERNS ABOUT THE LAW, OR ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT IT, HE WILL POSTPONE THE GOB DELIBERATION AND SEEK CLARIFICATION FROM US. THE GOB STUDY GROUP IS ATTEMPTING TO SEE IF THE COUNTRY HAS RECEIVED ANY POSITIVE BENEFIT FROM THE LAW AND WHETHER BOLIVIA MIGHT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED. IN THIS CONNECTION, WASHINGTON OUTPUT HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL. I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE PARTICULAR REFERENCE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LA PAZ 0781/2

TO THE VERY USEFUL AND EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS MADE BY JOHN FORD DURING THE DEBATE AT THE OAS THE WEEK OF JANUARY 20. A GENERAL THEME AMONG GOB OFFICIALS IS THAT THEY OPPOSE A SEPARATE SPECIAL LATIN AMERICAN MEETING TO DISCUSS THE TRADE BILL AND PREFER TO SEE IT REVIEWED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF EITHER THE "NEW DIALOGUE" OR AS ONE OF SEVERAL TOPICS ON THE AGENDA OF THE OAS ASSEMBLY. PRESS TREATMENT OF THE TRADE BILL HAS BEEN MIXED, WITH THE LEADING MORNING NEWSPAPERS SPLIT ON THE QUESTION. "EL DIARIO" IS OBJECTIVE ABOUT THE POSITIVE FEATURES OF THE LAW AND THE NEED TO CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE WHEREAS "PRESENCIA", THE CATHOLIC NEWSPAPER, TENDS TO HARP ON THE NEGATIVE FEATURES OF THE LAW, BLAMING POSTPONEMENT OF THE BA-MFM ON THE UNITED

STATES AS ONE OF THE STAGES IN THE DETERIORATION OF U.S.-
LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS WHICH WE HAVE BROUGHT ABOUT. "HOY",
THOUGH OF LIMITED CIRCULATION, HAS INFLUENCE BECAUSE OF ITS
SEMI-OFFICIAL STATUS. IT HAS TAKEN A HARSHLY CRITICAL LINE
TOWARD BOTH THE TRADE BILL AND THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE BA-MFM,
IN ITS EDITORIALS AND IN ARTICLES WRITTEN BY COLUMNISTS.

6. WE WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE REACTIONS AND EVOLVING
ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE "NEW DIALOGUE" AND REPORT
SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION.

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